

Franchise Tax Board**ANALYSIS OF ORIGINAL BILL**

Author: Steinberg Analyst: Jennifer Bettencourt Bill Number: SB 1502
Related Bills: See Legislative History Telephone: 845-5163 Introduced Date: February 21, 2008
Attorney: Patrick Kusiak Sponsor: _____

SUBJECT: Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Research Fund

SUMMARY

This bill would add the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Research Fund to the personal income tax (PIT) return as a voluntary contribution fund.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

According to the language of the bill, the purpose of this bill is to help fund research relating to the cause, cure, and prevention of ALS.

EFFECTIVE/OPERATIVE DATE

This bill would be effective January 1, 2009, and would apply to tax returns for taxable year 2008 filed on or after January 1, 2009.

POSITION

Pending.

SUMMARY OF SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1 has been provided to correct a technical error.

ANALYSISSTATE LAW

Current state tax law allows taxpayers to make contributions of their own funds (not tax liability) on their PIT returns to any of the 11 voluntary contribution funds (VCFs) listed on the return.

Board Position:

<input type="checkbox"/> S	<input type="checkbox"/> NA	<input type="checkbox"/> NP
<input type="checkbox"/> SA	<input type="checkbox"/> O	<input type="checkbox"/> NAR
<input type="checkbox"/> N	<input type="checkbox"/> OUA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PENDING

Department Director

Date

Selvi Stanislaus

3/26/08

With the following exceptions, VCFs remain on the PIT return until they are either repealed or fail to meet their minimum contribution amount.

- Except for the California Seniors Special Fund, which has no sunset date, each VCF has a specific sunset date.
- Except for the California Seniors Special Fund, the California Firefighters Memorial Fund, and the California Peace Officer Foundation Memorial Fund, each VCF must meet an initial minimum contribution amount of \$250,000.
- Except for the California Fund for Senior Citizens, the required minimum contribution amount is adjusted annually for inflation for each VCF.

The annual inflation adjustment is based on the percentage change in the California Consumer Price Index. The Franchise Tax Board (FTB) is required to make the following two determinations for each VCF by September 1 of each calendar year:

1. The minimum contribution amount for the next calendar year for the VCF to remain on the PIT return for that calendar year, and
2. Whether estimated contributions to the VCF during the current calendar year will be less than the minimum contribution amount for that calendar year.

FTB is also required to notify certain specified funds in writing of the minimum contribution amount required for the next calendar year.

If FTB estimates that a VCF will fail to meet or exceed the minimum contribution amount for a calendar year, that VCF is repealed effective January 1 of that calendar year.

General voluntary contribution provisions specify the following for all VCFs:

- Any contribution amounts designated prior to a fund's repeal must continue to be transferred and disbursed to that voluntary contribution fund.
- If the designee is unspecified, the contribution amount is transferred to the General Fund after reimbursing costs incurred by the FTB.
- If an individual designates contributions to more than one fund, and the actual amount available is less than the total amount contributed, the contribution would be allocated on a pro rata basis to the designated funds.

The general provisions also provide a formal queuing process for adding new contingent voluntary contribution funds to the tax return. New contingent funds are defined as funds that include language specifying that the fund may not be added to the return until another fund is removed. Upon enactment, new contingent funds are only added to the tax return when an existing fund is removed or when FTB determines space exists on the income tax return.

THIS BILL

This bill would add the ALS Research Fund (Fund) to the PIT return as a voluntary contribution fund. Taxpayers would be able to designate their own funds, not tax liability, for contribution to the Fund on their PIT returns in full dollar amounts of \$1 or more. Each signatory on a joint return may make the contributions individually. The designations for any taxable year must be made on the initial return for the taxable year and, once made, are irrevocable. A deduction, subject to the itemized deduction rules applicable to individuals, would be allowed for a contribution made pursuant to this bill.

This bill would specify that if the taxpayer's payments and credits reported on the PIT return fail to exceed the tax liability, the designation on the return would be treated as if no designation has been made.

This bill would require FTB to revise the tax return to include a designation space for the Fund and states legislative intent to include the Fund beginning with the 2008 tax return.

Beginning with contributions made in 2009, this bill would require the Fund to meet a minimum contribution amount for each calendar year. The "minimum contribution amount for a calendar year" is defined as \$200,000. The law authorizing designations to this fund would be repealed if contributions made under this bill fail to meet the minimum contribution amount.

The Fund would remain on the PIT return until January 1, 2013, in this case, the PIT return for the 2012 taxable year, unless a later enacted statute deletes or extends that date.

This bill would require FTB to do the following by September 1, 2009, and by September 1 of each subsequent calendar year that the Fund appears on the tax return:

- Estimate the amount of contributions that will be received by the end of that calendar year.
- Determine if the amount of contributions estimated to be received during the current calendar year will equal or exceed the minimum contribution amount.

This bill would require the State Controller to transfer money designated for this fund by taxpayers from the PIT Fund to the ALS Research Fund. Upon appropriation by the Legislature, the monies from this fund would be allocated as follows:

1. FTB and the Controller for reimbursement of costs incurred in administering the Fund.
2. The State Department of Public Health to provide grants to research the prevention, cure, screening, and treatment of ALS.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

There are four other bills currently in the legislative process that would add new voluntary contributions to the tax forms. Department staff has indicated that there is enough space on the existing tax forms to accommodate all of them, if necessary. As a result, while implementing this bill would require some changes to existing tax forms and instructions and information systems, these changes could be accomplished during the normal annual update.

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This bill states that, “There is in the State Treasury the ALS Fund to receive contributions...” but fails to include language that affirmatively “establishes” the fund within the State Treasury. Amendment 1 would affirmatively establish the Fund and resolve this concern.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

AB 1812 (Arambula, 2008) would establish the Fire Safety Fund for taxpayers to designate a contribution on the PIT return. AB 1812 is currently scheduled for hearing with the Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee.

AB 1935 (Fuller, 2008) would add the California Ovarian Cancer Research Fund for taxpayers to designate a contribution on the PIT return. AB 1935 is currently scheduled for hearing with the Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee.

AB 2291 (Mendoza, 2008) would add the Low Cost Spay-Neuter Fund for taxpayers to designate a contribution on the PIT return. AB 2291 is currently scheduled for hearing with the Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee.

AB 2518 (Torrico, 2008) would add the Northern California Cancer Research Fund for taxpayers to designate a contribution on the PIT return. AB 2518 is currently scheduled for hearing with the Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee.

SB 1249 (Alquist, Stats. 2006, Ch. 645) added general provisions for all existing VCF's by changing the application of the minimum contribution amounts for specified funds and the related requirements for FTB to calculate the required minimum contribution amounts and notify funds of such amounts.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Eleven voluntary contribution funds appeared on the 2007 California personal income tax return. Total contributions to these funds have varied from approximately \$3.4 million for the 1989 taxable year to approximately \$4.2 million¹ for the 2006 taxable year.

OTHER STATES' INFORMATION

Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, and New York allow for taxpayers to make charitable contribution designations on the personal income tax returns.

Of these states, *Illinois, Massachusetts, and Michigan* provide a Military Family Relief Fund designation on their personal income tax returns.

Illinois and *Michigan* requires a minimum contribution amount of \$100,000 for certain funds, and have various repeal dates.

¹ Amount contributed through December 27, 2007.

Massachusetts, Minnesota, and New York do not require a minimum contribution amount, and do not specify repeal dates.

The laws of these states were reviewed because their tax laws are similar to California's income tax laws.

FISCAL IMPACT

This bill would not significantly impact the department's costs.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Revenue Estimate

Based on data and assumptions discussed below, the revenue loss from this bill would be as follows:

Estimated Revenue Impact of SB 1502 Effective On or After January 1, 2009 Assumed Enactment Date After June 30, 2008			
Fiscal Year	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Revenue Loss	N/A	<\$150,000	<\$150,000

Estimates assume the fund is officially designated for returns starting with the 2008 tax year and the minimum level of contribution (\$200,000) is achieved each year. This estimate does not consider the possible changes in employment, personal income, or gross state product that could result from this bill.

Revenue Discussion

The revenue impact of this bill would be determined by the amount of contributions to the ALS Research Fund and the subsequent itemized deduction of such charitable contribution.

For this estimate, the following assumptions are made:

1. The fund would be added to the 2008 return,
2. The minimum contribution amount (\$200,000) would be achieved each year, and
3. An itemized deduction would be allowed and claimed for each contribution.

By applying an average marginal tax rate of 6%, the estimated revenue loss of this bill would be \$12,000 annually ($\$200,000 \times 6\% = \$12,000$). Because contributions reported on the 2008 tax return are actually made during the 2009 calendar year, the revenue impact would not occur until fiscal year 2009/2010.

POLICY CONCERNS

This bill would require a minimum contribution amount of \$200,000 each year without an indexing requirement. Generally, VCFs are required to meet a minimum contribution amount of \$250,000 or an amount adjusted for inflation for contributions made in subsequent years.

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FRANCHISE TAX BOARD'S
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO AB 1502
As Introduced February 21, 2008

AMENDMENT 1

On page 6, line 31, after 'There is', insert:

hereby established